

Frontline Fundraising: Increasing Your Library's Effectiveness and Building Library Advocates

Roberta A. Stevens
President
American Library Association

Why Do Fundraising?

- Libraries face a perfect storm of:
 - Escalating costs
 - Shrinking financial support
 - Increased demands for service
 - Surging usage
- To supplement traditional sources of funding for libraries
- The expectation of the largest transfer of transgenerational wealth ever in the next ten years

History of Fundraising in Libraries

- Academic libraries led the way with DORAL (1987) and ALADN (1995)
- Increasing trend for public libraries to set up foundations
- ALA's Development Office and LLAMA's Fundraising and Financial Development Section
- Frontline Fundraising presidential initiative
 - Developing a fundraising plan and online giving; using trustees, library staff and Friends groups; establishing a planned giving program; developing an honor and memorial bookplate program; conducting an annual fund drive; and moving donors to the "next level"

Beginning the Fundraising Process

- Mission:
 - What is unique about your library? What do you do? Who do you serve? (The “ask” must be directly related to the mission)
- Strategic plan:
 - The fundraising plan’s goals and timelines reflect the strategic plan (Turn problems into opportunities)
- Case statement:
 - Describe benefits and how success will be measured
 - Customize the statements for the prospect
 - Describe the costs, including in-kind contributions
 - Recognize the values and relationships...why donors give

Who Does the Fundraising?

- Fundraising Office staffed by professionals (large libraries)
- Directors and trustees with key assistance from staff (small or medium-sized libraries)
- Library supporters networked into the community who can be effective spokespeople
- Remember: Who does the asking can be as important as what you are asking for

Prospects = Donors

- Cultivating prospects is building a relationship over time
- Self-identified prospects include previous donors, trustees, friends groups, volunteers, faculty (when appropriate), staff and users
- The best prospects are individuals who are at a stage where the disposition of their financial assets is a concern
- Tracking prospects is key to effective fundraising
- Measuring success with prospects

Making Donations Easy

- Donor appeals in brochures and printed materials
- Verbal appeals at events and programs
- Online giving capability, including the ability to text a donation
- Testimonials from previous donors through blogs, the library's website donor page, social media and online newsletter

Types of Gifts

- Annual gifts, the cornerstone of fundraising
- Major (“stop and think”) gifts
- Planned gifts and bequests
- Endowments
- The importance of a gift acceptance policy

More About Annual Gifts

- Philanthropic giving in the U.S.:
 - Individuals...more than 80%
 - Corporations and foundations...nearly 20%
- Annual gifts are more substantial
- Solicitation is timed for the last three months of the year
- Segment the donor list
- Provide levels of giving and examples of what each level allows you to do
- Name the giving levels

More About Planned Gifts

- The most important factors are the timeliness of the “ask” and the “ask” itself
- Donors advantages include saving on gift and estate taxes, reducing or avoiding capital gains taxes, and leaving a legacy without giving up assets
- Types of bequests include charitable, residuary, restricted, charitable remainder (and more)
- Life insurance planned gifts

Capital Campaign

- Generally for a specific period of time, a specific amount, specific purpose
- Often includes an endowment component

Acknowledging Donors and Donor Stewardship

- Use every opportunity to thank donors
- Send a letter within a day or two of the donation
- Personalize letters to major donors
- Have a policy that specifies which signatures appear on gifts of various levels
- Make sure the recognition is in scale with the contribution
- Communicate with major donors and provide updates on how their contributions are being used
- Send invitations to events and provide special seating for major donors
- Provide tokens of appreciation (example: lapel pins)
- Have on-site and online plaques or Honor Rolls
- Treat donors the way you want to be treated

“Donor Moves Management”

- Moving donors from small contributions to increasingly larger gifts
- Recordkeeping is key: donor and contact information, date, amount and how the donation is used
- For pledges: payment amounts, how many payments will be made and expected payment dates
- Note if there are requests not to contact, solicit, email or call
- Record involvement, including attendance at events, and whom the donor has a relationship with
- Lists requests for a significant gift even if it did not lead to a donation
- Keep a brief record of any meetings or conversations (Did they reveal any likes, dislikes or interests that coincide with the library?)